

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 ARA-10 IO-13
TRSE-00 AID-05 ACDA-12 MCE-00 OMB-01 EB-08
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SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /130 R

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TO AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 150962

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: MASS, NG

SUBJECT: NIGER'S INTEREST IN C-130 AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 147646

1. DURING FOLLOW-ON DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. AIR FORCE
OFFICIALS MAY 31, NIGER AIR FORCE COMMANDER FRANCOIS
WRIGHT MENTIONED SERIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRAINING
PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN INTRODUCTION OF C-130 AIRCRAFT, IN
ADDITION TO FINANCING PROBLEMS MENTIONED REFTEL. THE
NIGER AIR FORCE IS APPARENTLY ALREADY HARD-PRESSED IN
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OPERATING AND MAINTAINING THE 737 AIRCRAFT, PROCURED
COMMERICALLY FROM BOEING.

2. ACCORDING TO WRIGHT, THE INTRODUCTION OF C-130 AIR-
CRAFT WILL CREATE MANPOWER PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE LIMITED
NUMBER OF AVAILABLE QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ARE CURRENTLY
ASSIGNED TO THE 737 PROGRAM. TO OPERATE TWO PROGRAMS,

NIGER AIR FORCE MUST RECRUIT AND TRAIN ADDITIONAL TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL, WHICH IN ITSELF IS A PROBLEM, NOT EVEN CONSIDERING THE NEED FOR THEM TO BE ENGLISH QUALIFIED, IF USAF IS TO CONDUCT THE TRAINING. NIGER ALSO LACKS FACILITIES TO PARK THE AIRCRAFT, FOR AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE, AND HOUSING FOR USAF AND CONTRACTOR

TO FACILITATE AIRCRAFT INTEGRATION, NIGER AIR FORCE INTENDS TO ASK FOR A PHASED INTRODUCTION OF AIRCRAFT (PROBABLY ONE EVERY 9 TO 12 MONTHS).

3. LOCKHEED WASHINGTON OFFICE REPORTS THAT LOCKHEED REPS ALSO MET WITH CAPT. WRIGHT DURING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT AND NIGER MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN PROCURING COMMERCIAL VERSIONS OF THE AIRCRAFT, IF LOCKHEED CAN ARRANGE COMMERCIAL FINANCING. THRUST OF LOCKHEED PRESENTATION TO CAPT. WRIGHT WAS THAT THE THREE PLANE PACKAGE SHOULD BE TAILORED TO NIGER'S SPECIFIC NEEDS. LOCKHEED PROPOSES THAT NIGER CONSIDER MIXED PACKAGE OF C-130 CONFIGURATIONS: (A) ONE C-130 AND TWO L-100 DASH 20 COMMERCIAL VERSIONS, OR (B) TWO C-130'S AND ONE L-100 DASH 20 VERSION. (FYI: IT IS POSSIBLE TO ADAPT THE L-100 DASH 20 COMMERCIAL VERSION FOR PARACHUTE DROP CAPABILITY AT LATER DATE. HOWEVER, SUCH CHANGES FALL UNDER MUNITIONS EXPORT CONTROLS AND WOULD REQUIRE USG APPROVAL,END FYI.) LOCKHEED REPS MAY SOON BE VISITING NIGER TO PURSUE THESE DIS-
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CUSSIONS.

4. AS NOTED REFTTEL, NIGER FMS PURCHASE OF C-130'S WITHIN FY 78 FMS CEILING IS NO LONGER UNDER CONSIDERATION AND NIGER MUST AT A LATER DATE REACTIVATE FMS REQUEST. THEREFORE, SINCE FMS DISCUSSIONS ARE NO LONGER ACTIVE, IT IS NOT INAPPROPRIATE FOR GON TO PURSUE THIS PURCHASE COMMERCIALLY. HOWEVER, UNDER U.S. LAW SALE OF ANY MAJOR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT, LIKE C-130 AIRCRAFT, IN THE AMOUNT OF DOLS 25 MILLION OR MORE TO A COUNTRY OTH"R THAN NATO MEMBERS, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALA;D, AND JAPAN, MUST GO THROUGH FMS CHANNELS. THE AMOUNT APPLIES TO THE MAJOR DEFENSE ITEM AND DOES NOT INCLUDE THE SUPPORT, TRAINING, ETC. THUS, IT APPEARS NIGER COULD BUY TWO C-130'S COMMERCIALLY, BUT NOT THREE.

5. CAPT. WRIGHT ALSO ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SENDING A SMALL USAF TEAM TO NIGER IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS TO ASSIST THE NIGER AIR FORCE IN REVIEWING THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING A C-130 PROGRAM. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS REQUEST WAS DISTINCT FROM THE USAF SITE SURVEY REQUIREMENT

NOTED IN EARLIER CORRESPONDENCE, WHICH HE RECOGNIZED
WOULD BE REQUIRED IF NIGER EVENTUALLY PROCEEDED TO
PROCURE C-130 AIRCRAFT VIA FMS. WE ARE PREPARED TO
AUTHORIZE DOD TO SEND A SMALL USAF TEAM TO ASSIST THE
NIGER AIR FORCE IN ASSESSING ITS ABILITY TO ABSORB
C-130 AIRCRAFT. THIS IS A DEFENSE SERVICE FOR WHICH WE

MUST CHARGE NIGER UNDER U.S. LAW. THIS WOULD BE DONE
UNDER AN FMS CASE AND COULD COST DOLS 10,000-15,000
DEPENDING ON SIZE OF TEAM AND DURATION OF STAY IN NIGER.
THE TEAM'S REPORT WOULD GIVE THE NIGER GOVERNMENT A
LANNING DOCUMENT OR WORK PROGRAM OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS
FOR FACILITIES, TRAINING AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS THAT
WOULD BE APPLICABLE WHETHER NIGER PROCURED C-130 AIRCRAFT
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COMMERCIALLY OR VIA FMS, OR WHETHER NIGER OPTED FOR
ANOTHER TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. IN THIS REGARD, TEAM COULD
HELP ASSESS WHETHER NIGER AIR FORCE PLANNED MISSIONS
NECESSITATE A TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT THE SIZE OF THE C-130.
PLEASE FORWARD FORMAL REQUEST FOR FMS LETTER OF OFFER
SHOULD NIGER GOVT WISH TO BUY THIS DEFENSE SERVICE THAT
CAPT. WRIGHT SUGGESTED AND, WHICH WE AGREE, WOULD PROVE
USEFUL TO NIGER AIR FORCE. CHRISTOPHER

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